



Congressional Record

Mr. BISHOP (GA). Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose Rep. SCOTT GARRETT's amendment to the FY2011 Continuing Resolution. His proposal to erase funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services will effectively eliminate all specific federal funding for libraries. Doing so would cut off access to information for millions of Americans.

I believe our government needs to be more fiscally responsible, but as the son a librarian, I know the high cost these cuts will have in the long term. If we are serious about competing in a global economy, we must provide our children with the tools and resources to succeed, and cutting funds for our libraries will only hinder our chance to win the future.

As a nation, we cannot afford to cut ourselves off from such necessary tools for economic recovery as books, periodicals, newspapers, the internet, and the bevy of information our public libraries provide. If funding for public libraries is removed, the Georgia Public Library Service will no longer be able to provide the following:

- The statewide network of high-speed Internet data lines providing access to all 400+ libraries in Georgia
- The award-winning, nationally-recognized PINES network and statewide library card system, which is used by more than 2.4 million Georgians and provides statewide lending via a shared database of more than 10 million items
- A Statewide daily courier service for interlibrary loans to the headquarters of all 61 public library systems in Georgia—nearly 1 million books shared in this way
- “Talking book” library services for the blind and other Georgians whose physical abilities require the use of books and magazines in audio format or in Braille—encompassing more than 1 million annual circulations
- The GALILEO online databases, which contain essential quality digital resources for students (kindergarten through higher education), teachers, professors and public library users

- The statewide Summer Reading Program, which served approximately 450,000 children in 2010—an increase of more than 10 percent from 2009
- Shared services that provide necessary OCLC cataloging information and interlibrary loan access to every library in the state
- Continuing education programs and training for library staff who work in all types of libraries— public, university, K–12 and specialized— and for trustees
- Consulting services to assist in improving local library operations in technology, governance, services to children, and other areas.

As we bounce back from the recession, it is clear that more Georgians are turning to our public libraries for informational and educational needs. Libraries play a critical role in workforce recovery and economic development throughout our state. These funds allow Georgia's libraries to take advantage of economies of scale that benefit all libraries. The loss of these critical funds would force the elimination of services essential to Georgia residents of all ages—and this, Mr. Speaker, is at a cost we cannot afford!